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ABSTRACT

The community school is a viable alternative when attempting to maintain a high quality school program in the face of declining enrollment. Community education may be defined as a concept while the community school is the delivery system for that concept. Community schools respond to the three major problems linked with declining enrollments: underutilization of school facilities, fiscal restraint with respect to education, and decline in school program offering. The community school paradigm used in this paper is based on the writing of Minzey, who lists six components necessary for an effective community education program: (1) an education program for school age children: (2) joint use of school and community facilities: (3) additional programs for school-age children and youth: (4) programs for adults: (5) delivery and coordination of community services: (6) community involvement. The primary reason for promoting community schools involves the reduction of capital expenditures. However, community schools also provide more relevant programs, coordination of community services, and community involvement in educational decision-making. (Author/JK)

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KEITH SULLIVAN

MAY, 1978

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Keith Sullivan

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COMMUNITY SCHOOLS: A SOLUTION TO DECLINING ENROLMENT

Introduction

By now most Canadian educators should be aware that the vast majority of school systems throughout Canada are experiencing declining school enrolment. It is not the purpose of this paper to convince the reader that declining school enrolments are and have been occurring in Canada for the last five years, and that the foreseeable future affords little relief from this trend. For statistical support for this downward trend, the reader is referred to R.W.B. Jackson's (1977) Implications for Education of Recent Trends in Live Births in International and Interprovincial Migration of Children.

This paper will suggest a possible solution for many of the problems produced by declining enrolments. The solution involves the utilization of the community school mode of operation by the majority of Canadian schools.

For many educators, community schools have always been the best organizational alternative for operating schools. With declining school enrolments, the community school concept becomes increasingly appealing from both a political and economic point of view.

Problems Related to Declining Enrolment

There are at least three major problems linked with declining school enrolments. The first is an underutilization of school facilities. The problem of the late fifties and early sixties was too many children for existing classroom space. Now the majority of Canadian school systems are faced with an embarrassingly small student body in many school buildings, making it difficult to justify the operational expenses for these buildings. In many cases school buildings must be closed and the remainder of the students transferred to other school buildings.

The second problem involves fiscal policies. Most financial agreements between local school boards and provincial governments are directly related to the number of students taught. With the number of students decreasing, the amount of money available from provincial sources is decreasing proportionately. This places restraints on introducing new programs and makes effective planning for the future difficult (Hughes et al., 1977).

Since teachers' salaries account for well over half a school district's budget, one of the easiest ways to cope with budget reduction is to reduce the number of teaching positions. Herein lies the third problem. Usually the first positions terminated cause few problems. However, a point is finally reached when the number of programs (e.g. Physical education, music) must be reduced because the school system cannot afford the specialized teachers required for the existing program.

These three major problems can be at least partially solved by developing community schools. However, there are many different philosophies and concepts of community schools and it is important to be clear and specific about the concept utilized in this paper. After clarifying the community school concept, once again discussion will centre around these three problems and their relationship to community schools.

Explanation of Community Schools

Possibly the best way to describe the major desires and aspirations of community school proponents is to indicate how they view the "traditional" public school system. As early as 1942, this view was described by Carr (1942:34) in a scenario entitled "An Island Apart". Carr described the traditional school as an island set apart from the mainland (the school's community) by a "deep moat of convention and tradition". A drawbridge was lowered over the moat at certain times of the day to allow the children from the mainland to cross to the island in the morning and return to the mainland at night. Very few adults from the mainland were allowed or encouraged to cross to the

island and rarely were children allowed to venture back to the mainland during the day. The paradox of the scenario is revealed when Carr reminds the reader that the task for which the students have been separated from the mainland "was to develop skills to allow these students to live on the mainland".

In this scenario, a major message of the advocate of community schools is revealed, i.e., the goal of school programs should be to allow children and adults to develop skills and equip themselves to live successfully in their surrounding communities. The school belongs to the communities and is supposed to serve the needs of the community. Consequently, it seems irrational to exclude a school's community numbers and their lifestyles from the educational process.

Community School or Community Education

Before proceeding further, the term "community school" and "community education" should be clarified. Seay (1974:11) wrote "...the community school concept has truly evolved into a community education concept". What Seay seems to be implying is that the community school concept can include all of the components (to be discussed later) of the concept of community education, but the former takes place (at least partially) in a school building, while the latter could occur completely divorced from any school building or school system.

Minzey and LaTarte (1972:11) wrote that "the difference between community education and community school is that community education is the concept and community school is the delivery system for that concept". According to them some communities have tried to use agencies other than the public school and have not met with great success.

Public schools seem to offer many advantages over other agencies when attempting to introduce community education into an existing community. The first advantage is that most communities already have a school building and a staff which are publicly financed. Second, no one else in the community is more involved in education than those in the school building, and finally, schools do not seem to be involved in the political realm as much as other service agencies (Minzey and Latarte, 1972:12).

In attempting to avoid confusion over the terms "community school" and "community education", it should be made clear that in this paper the two terms are seen as conceptually synonymous. The concept will be operationalized from the school buildings.

Components of the Community School Concept

The identification of the components of the community school concept is a rather difficult process. Similar to most broad, all-encompassing terms, the term "community school" is often used in educational discussions on policies as if all participants hold the same definition. Yet, as found by Driscoll (1976) in a study of Alberta educators, many different perceptions and definitions of these terms are held by knowledgeable people.

The confusion in education concerning the concept of community schools was underlined by Bushey (1972) in a doctoral study completed in the State of Indiana. He compared selected community school programs in Indiana with a theoretical (community school) model elementary school. The theoretical model was developed from the community school education literature and recommendations from the panel of judges knowledgeable in the area. The following five major areas were identified as essential ingredients in the concept of community schools:

(a) financial commitment of the community;
(b) community advisory council;
(c) a policy on staffing procedures;
(d) program development;
(e) outside agency involvement.

From his study Bushey concluded that there was little evidence of a common understanding of the nature of community schools in the State of Indiana as defined by the literature and a panel of experts and, second, the major emphasis in the state was on community school programs and not on the process of community schools.

Confusion with community schools is increased by many well-intentioned articles dealing with community education and/or community

schools because they attempt to oversimplify a complex issue. For example, the following paragraph was written in Education B.C. (1971):

> "The issue of community education is simply to find ways to broaden the education available to citizens in every way... Education for adults, for pre-schoolers, for retired persons, for housewives, for children and teenagers...on an integrated basis, using as much as possible existing facilities."

This quotation has touched upon an important aspect of community schools - but only one aspect. Community education does not seem to be "simply" anything, as it involves a complex weaving of a number of components. In the following sections, a much more comprehensive view of community schools is provided.

Paradigms

Many paradigms have been developed for community schools. For example, Hodgson (1972:61) suggested a two component model consisting of "the school and the community" and the "community and the school". Smilanich (1972) proposed four components and labelled them: community councils, life-centered curriculum, extension of school services, and coordinated delivery of social services.

The community school paradigm used in this paper is based on the writing of Minzey (1974). This paradigm has been chosen because it is concise, comprehensive and relatively easy to operationalize and, it includes the important aspects of community school education as identified in the literature. Minzey lists the following six components as being essential to an effective community education program.

1. Education program for school age children. This component of community education is already available and operating in all public schools. It is included in the basic component, so that the P-12 program is seen in its proper perspective, i.e., as a vital part of community education. Too often community educators leave the regular school program out of their definition of community education. However, it is also important to remember that this "regular" school program is only a portion of the total package of community education.

The major change to be made to the regular school curriculum in relation to community education, is to make the curriculum more community based and relevant to everyday living. This could be accomplished by including work experience projects in every child's timetable, by having guest lecturers from the community speak on a frequent and regular basis to the children in their classroom; and, by designing text books and class assignments to reflect the local community.

2. Joint use of school and community facilities. This component of community education involves the use of the school buildings by the community members during the day, on weekends, at night and during school holidays. In addition, this component includes the use of community facilities by the school staff and students, e.g., community swimming pool or rink.

3. Additional programs for school age children and youth. Included in this aspect of community education are programs designed and executed for school age children before and after school hours, on weekends and during holidays. The activities could include enrichment, remedial and supplemental educational programs, as well as recreational, cultural, and avocational programs.

4. Programs for adults. The community education concept also includes programs for the adults in the community. Student body, in this instance, is perceived as all of the people who reside in the community served by the school, regardless of age. Programs, similar to those described above for school age children and youth, should be available for the adults. In addition, the adults should be free to participate in the regular academic day programs.

5. Delivery and coordination of community services. "The key role of the schools is catalytic and the school would not provide programs or services which are already provided or capable of being provided by other agencies" (Minzey, 1974:2).

Communities usually have an abundance of services. However, a lack of coordination of these services often gives the impression that more

money and manpower are needed. One of the basic goals of community education is to coordinate existing services of the community before new or expanded programs are started.

6. Community involvement. The final component in Minzey's community education conceptual framework is effective community involvement. The community members must be involved in important decision making and in all aspects of the community education program. This is accomplished by the formation of community councils composed of representatives from as many sectors of the community as possible; for example, students, senior citizens, parents, business persons, teachers, the unemployed, etc. It is important that these people be involved in major decision making, not in trivial decisions as usually given to the Parent-Teacher Associations of the past.

Reasons for Promoting Community Schools

After reading Minzey's concept of community schools, numerous reasons should be obvious for promoting community schools, both from pedagogical and declining enrolment viewpoints (hopefully, they will never move too far apart). However, some elaboration should be beneficial to those interested in developing community schools to alleviate pressures caused by declining enrolments.

Capital Costs

The first reasons for promoting community schools involves the reduction of capital expenditures. Both educators and laymen showing concern for rising educational and municipal building costs can recognize that joint use of school and community facilities could reduce the need for additional buildings.

Educators from coast to coast in Canada are advocating the increased use of school facilities. Stevens (1974:12), one of the initial supporters of community schools in Canada, wrote from Vancouver that "schools are far too expensive to build and maintain to be sitting idle up to 50% of the time". While Conrad (1973:4), Director of Schools in

Halifax, supported the opening of the schools to the public and wrote "...the public school facilities belong to the community, and as a consequence should serve a wide segment of it". Of course, these people were writing in the days when school buildings were being fully utilized throughout the day and left idle only at night. Now declining enrolment has introduced the additional problem of having major portions of school buildings idle and unused during the school day.

Relevant Programs

Community school advocates wish to meet the challenge of providing more relevant programs in the schools by better handling of the existing school program, and the introduction of additional programs for children and adults into the community school curriculum.

Importance of the existing school program. In discussing community schools, Seay (1974:14) remarked that "schooling for children and youth is relegated to a somewhat less dominant position in the hierarchy of educational forces". This attitude concerns many traditional educationalists, as they see implicit in these remarks a lack of desire to hold academic excellence in the basics important. This concern is not altogether unfounded as many community school education advocates seem to disregard principles of learning (e.g. learning theory) and the need for any formal objectives or evaluation of their programs. As Storm (1974: 114) wrote:

> "There is a view of anti-intellectualism in the community curriculum movement; the sort that enables a school to claim that it is running extensive local study programs while not possessing any local planning reports, census volumes, or even large scale maps."

However, many writers, such as Seay (1974:27) see the regular academic program as very important although not the only important aspect to be performed by the school. Minzey's conceptual framework for community schools places the regular academic program as a vital part of community education. He (Minzey, 1974:3) says "...the regular program is a key part, but not the only part of education and it should be tied into the total community education program".

The "Worth Report" (Worth, 1972:146) speaks out strongly in favour of the existing school program. The following passage is an excerpt from this report.

> The community school concept must not, however be introduced to the detriment of the fundamental purpose for which it exists. Therefore, it seems necessary to suggest the following categories of school use, in order of priority: prime consideration should be given to the basic education function; secondary consideration should be given to early and further education programs; and after all educational needs have been met, consideration should be given to social services and various community activities.

Changes to the existing school program. Changes in the existing school programs are strongly advocated by community school education proponents such as Hiemstra (1972:18) and Stevens (1974). Three major changes which repeatedly appear in the literature are: the regular school programs should be available to all age groups, not just to those between the ages of 5-21 years; the regular school program should be closely tied to life in the local community; and the regular school program should reflect the needs of the local community members.

The desire for the regular program to be available to all people, regardless of age, is a basic component of community schools. The regular school program is usually open only to those people between the ages of 5-21 years. A community school program involves people of all ages using the community facilities and resources for vocational and academic work (Decker, 1975:11). Most adults may only be able to attend school at night, but provisions are made for those few who may be able to attend classes during the day.

The second change is to relate the regular program more closely to life in the local community. This can be accomplished by basing classroom course content (e.g. math examples, literature stories) on the type of community in which the school is located (i.e. rural fishing, farming, urban industry, etc.); allowing students to do course work in the community and encouraging members of the community to act as resource persons in the classroom.

Some examples of these types of changes in schools are appearing in the literature. During the 1972-73 school year, Matthew Halton High School in Pincher Creek, Alberta involved 80 students and 30 local employers in a work experience program. The students were allowed to gain credits by spending half days away from the school working as nursing aids, motor mechanics, clerks and grocery store workers (Pinkney, 1973). For example, although field trips and resource people are used as learning experiences in most Canadian schools, community school advocates believe that many more of these activities have to become a regular part of the school curriculum.

Norcross (1971) wrote of a Canadian community college which utilized Indian band members to tell white students about the history of their people. Students then travelled to the band reserve to observe Indian religion, law and dance.

The final change proposed for the regular school curriculum is to allow programs to reflect the needs of the local community. Gibbons (1973) suggested that "experience weeks" be utilized during school time. During these weeks, students are excused from scheduled classes to become involved in helping others without expecting a reward. The emphasis is placed on cooperation with others and making a contribution to the community.

The Board of Education (1970) for the City of Toronto started a summer project in 1968 for students unable to find summer employment and interested in taking educational courses. The project was termed "Summer of Experience, Exploration and Discovery" (SEED). SEED was extended into the school year after a formal request was made by the students and parents to continue this program as an alternative secondary school program.

The needs of particular community members were reflected in the SEED program as students and community members assisted in its design. The program had a minimum of formal structure; a substantial increase in student freedom, management and responsibility; core subjects of languages, math and science; and a wide variety of courses designed and

conducted by the students with the assistance of resource people from the community.

Another example of a school responding to peculiar needs of the local community appeared in Kingston, Jamaica (Storm, 1974). A junior secondary school took former students back into the school because there was no work for them on the island. They learned particular skills (e.g. carpentry and sewing) and completed jobs for the school.

Additional program for children. Most schools have programs for children in addition to the regular school program. Community schools encourage and promote these activities. Minzey (1974:4) said:

> "Additional information activities or experiences can be provided by expanding offerings to the students before school, after school, weekends and summers. Enrichment remedial and supplemental educational activities can be offered as well as recreational, cultural and avocational programs."

School personnel working under the community school education philosophy would assist and encourage groups to organize field trips; such as the 10 day excursion by 200 students and 13 teachers of David Thompson Secondary School in Vancouver to a British Columbia National Park to study wildlife and ecology (Dick, 1973). Other examples of additional programs are hot lunch programs, as developed in many lower socio-economic level neighbourhoods (Education B.C., 1972), and the "Jordan Plan". The latter is an offering of courses at Archbishop Jordan High School, Sherwood Park, Alberta (Department of Education, Edmonton Regional Office, 1975:109). The regular five-day school week was compressed into four days (by extending the time spent in class on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday) with no reduction of actual classroom time. The school day on Wednesday was devoted entirely to non-compulsory programs for both the regular high school students and adults. During the spring session of 1975, 20 courses, such as automotive, canoe construction and nonstructured German classes were offered.

Additional programs for adults. Adult education is often seen as synonymous with community schools. If a particular school has an active and ambitious adult education program, the school is often designated as a community school. For example, Baldasari (1972) completed a Ph.D.

dissertation at the University of Utah entitled "A Comparative Study of the Community Education Concept in Selected Community Schools in Davis County". Yet his study was based upon a questionnaire that inquired only about adult courses.

According to the definition of community schools used in this paper, adult education is certainly not synonymous with community schools. Adult education, the same as the regular academic school program and additional programs for children, is only one important component of community schools. Seay (1974:14) writes that "the growing need for lifelong education becomes more and more obvious. Education for adults becomes an increasingly necessary part of community education."

Many communities have well attended adult programs held in their schools with a wide variety of courses dealing with such conservative subjects as high school history to more provocative subjects and Yoga and belly dancing. Matthew Halton High School in Pincher Creek, Alberta (Cope and Pinkney, 1974) and Central Algoma Secondary School near Sault Saint Marie, Ontario (Fergusson, 1974) have received attention in the literature for their successful adult classes. The latter had a night school attendance that almost equalled the daytime school enrolment.

Minzey and LaTarte (1972:81) point out a very basic difference between adult programs provided through community education and adult programs provided by departments of adult education, recreation and similar organizations. They cite the difference as a conceptual one based on objectives and goals, rather than the actual programs delivered. Adult education or recreation departments usually have objectives that deal with the provision of programs which will allow people to develop new skills and grow in areas which will allow them to live a more fulfilling life. Community education accepts these objectives and adds a dimension, beyond the programs themselves. This dimension uses the contact of adult programs to attempt to foster desire to improve the local community. Community school education allows for both encouragement of people in the courses to identify the problems in the community, and facilitation of a move to correct these problems. Therefore, the completion of the course is not the end in itself.

These same community school objectives for adult education appear in the writings of Lovett (1975:49) in a discussion concerning the development of adult education in Liverpool, England. He termed this work as "adult education and community development" and described it as follows:

> "Community adult education sought to support the activities of local people in their efforts to play a positive role in issues affecting their daily lives. It was concerned to assist in the process of personal fulfillment by emphasizing the opportunity afforded by education to strengthen community bonds and, at the same time, to widen the choices available to individuals in such communities. It sought to think of people in relation to other people and the satisfaction of their education needs and interest in such a context rather than a series of quite separate needs and interests calling for separate institutional arrangements."

A Coordination of Community Services.

Responsibility for education. When elaborating on his definition of community education, Seay (1974:13) stated:

> "The role of the school is not diminished (in community education) except for the need for cooperative action when it recognizes the fact that there are many educational agencies in every community that have legitimate educational aims - and that each agency has a right to serve and be served."

Later in his text, Seay (1974:64) returns to this theme, when suggesting that some agencies find it difficult to be accepted because of a number of common misconceptions held by society. The misconception, of importance to our discussion here, is that the schools take full responsibility for each educational function which society demands. He lists seven functions (e.g. transmitting culture) for which society has given education prime responsibility and ten functions (e.g. relating the individual to society) for which society has given educational institutions secondary responsibility.

Social agencies other than the school. It seems obvious upon examination of Seay's lists, that all educational institutions, i.e., school colleges and universities, could not handle the designated educational functions. One alternative route for these institutions to follow would be the development of a close working relationship with other community

agencies in an attempt to provide services to the community and yet to avoid duplication.

Minzey and LaTarte (1972:23) suggest that this route appears to be the most plausible alternative to use as the public does not seem receptive to the formation of more community agencies to alleviate community problems. By sheer numbers, it would appear that more agencies are not needed. For example, a catalogue of service agencies in Calgary (Alberta Social Services and Community Health, 1975), a city of approximately 450,000 people, listed 123 service agencies (excluding schools). The report (p.iv) also explained that most of the agencies surveyed provided at least two or more services to the community.

Three general trends were identified by the Alberta Social Services and Community Health Report (1975:ii) as indicated by the data collected from the 123 agencies surveyed. Two of the trends indicated that agencies were attempting to involve the public in carrying out the agencies' services, and that agencies were willing to become involved in public relations work. The trend most relevant to the present discussion was described as:

> "...the expression by the agencies of a desire to be more coordinated and have better interagency relationships. Thirty percent of the agencies interviewed were already active in this campaign."

Both Tasse (1972) and Reiss (1971) found that in school community relationships, there were significant differences between the amount of existing and desired cooperation between the school and service agencies. All agencies wanted a more cooperative relationship.

Business community. Up to this point the discussion has centered around cooperation with school and social service agencies. It is also important to recognize that the private enterprise business community can help the school (and vice versa) and that coordination and cooperation is needed with these relationships. Darling (1975) argued that business people should interact with and help educators. He cites examples of Michigan Bell Company holding training sessions for school administrators on the topic of administrative and supervisory techniques, as well as

collaborating with public school teachers to design a course on electricity. Community school educators believe much more can be accomplished with cooperation between school and private business.

Leadership in coordination. From the previous discussions it seems that coordination of community services is a desirable and essential condition to have in a community to facilitate problem solving. However, which agency should attempt to spearhead the coordination and cooperation? Minzey and LaTarte (1972:11) strongly suggest the neighbourhood school be this "spearheading" agency because the school system is usually not as politically involved with the government or interest group as other community agencies. Also, since the school is a readily accepted part of most communities, and carries a strong legitimate right to be involved in the community, it probably has a better chance than other agencies to assume the role of coordinator.

Another reason to have school personnel coordinate community activities is the availability of physical facilities. With today's declining enrolments as mentioned previously, many schools have extra rooms which could be easily converted for use as agency personnel offices and/or interagency meeting space.

Community Involvement in Educational Decision Making

Saul Alinsky (1971:104) said:

> It is the schizophrenia of a free society that we outwardly espouse faith in the people but inwardly have strong doubts whether the people can be trusted.

Alinsky's thoughts seem to be manifested in the method of decision making used in most public schools. However, local community involvement in educational decision-making is one of the most important underpinnings of the community school philosophy. All paradigms of community schools or communication, known to the author, include community involvement in educational decision making as an extremely important component. Smilanich (1972:48), in his paradigm, included this concept as "formation of community councils" and stated:

> "Basic to the concept of community schools is the belief that leadership to be effective must be diffused, that the school will function best if each participant shares some of the responsibility for leadership...."

Minzey (1974:4) includes the concept of community involvement in decision making in his paradigm of community education and said, "That phase of Community Education has often been described as the effort to return to 'participatory democracy'". He considered community involvement in decision making to be one of the most important and yet one of the most difficult components of community schools to successfully operationalize.

Gittell is probably the most renowned and prolific writer in the area of decentralization with respect to decision making in education. She claims that professionals, over time, have used their expertise to secure greater control over educational jobs and funds, and finally to policy making. She (Gittell, 1970:115) wrote:

> "Current movement for urban school reform through expanded community control is an attempt to achieve a new balance of power by reintroducing competition in the system. Local community groups are competing with the professionals for power, resources and a larger share in the decision-making process.

Canada appears to be at a recognition stage with respect to community involvement in decision making. Corman (1975:36-42) states that in Canadian literature, there is little indication of local community control of education. However, many recommendations for more community control of schools are being made to provincial governments throughout Canada. One of the most comprehensive and practical recommendations was outlined in the Nova Scotia Royal Commission on Education, Public Services and Provincial-Municipal Relations (1974). This commission made strong recommendations to the Nova Scotia Provincial Government to allow more community participation in educational decision making. The Nova Scotia Royal Commission calls for the school, rather than the school system, to become the basic unit of education.

The report suggests that each school should have a school council composed of: (1) the school principal, normally serving as secretary, (2) two elected representatives from the school staff, (3) three parents of students, elected at an annual meeting which is called by the regional

board, and (4) three residents of the area, not necessarily parents, appointed by the regional board. A slightly different composition is recommended for councils of schools with feeder schools but space will not be taken here to describe this alternative in detail.

The Nova Scotia Royal Commission recommends that the councils be given a considerable amount of power in the educational decision making process. For example, in choosing a principal for their school, the council will recommend three candidates from the applicants to the regional board, as well as indicating a first preference, if any. The regional board shall then appoint one of the three persons recommended.

Eleven regional boards of education are proposed. These boards will have the same boundaries as proposed new counties. Six members of the board are to be elected, two are to be appointed by the county council from its members, one appointed by the teachers and one appointed by the school councils. The Minister of Education may appoint one or two additional members.

The school principal's tenure, under the Nova Scotia Royal Commission recommendations, would be a term of seven years, with the first year being an "acting" principalship term. After seven years, reappointment should be on the advice of the council. Recommendations for termination of the principal's contract could occur at any time. The other professional and nonprofessional staff of the school would be hired by the regional board after consultation with the council and principal. However, the board has the sole authority to terminate contracts or transfer staff.

Other Nova Scotia Royal Commission recommendations relevant to community school education are that school councils should be consulted regarding the construction of schools; that all new school programs should be submitted by the principal to the council for approval; and, that the council must make an annual report to the regional board. In anticipation of disputes between the school councils and regional boards, the Nova Scotia Royal Commission proposed the establishment of a Nova Scotia School Commission. This latter Commission would be independent of the Nova Scotia Department of Education and would have the responsibility and power to arbitrate and settle disputes between the regioanl boards and councils.

The Nova Scotia Royal Commission also suggested that the school council should facilitate parental understanding and support of the school programs and ensure that the regional director and staff give all available support to their school. A school council could declare their school a "community school" with the cooperation of the Continuing Education Department.

Richer (1975:3) in discussing the viability of these proposals, wrote:

> "All of the contemporary concerns in education could thereby be responded to effectively while the one really big concern of government, fiscal control, was nailed down by the province. But the Commissioners were perhaps appalled by the possible anarchistic implications of their proposals. Thus the overall plan included the 'monitoring' school commission, and the regional bureaucratic control by means of a decentralized Departmental field office system. As the chairman of the Commission announced at a public meeting following the release of the report, this was not to be a plan for people to 'do their own thing'."

Ricker declared that it would be a long time before the Province of Nova Scotia moved on the report's recommendation (if at all). However, he predicted (p.4) to "look for other provinces to show an interest in the general organizational design proposed by the Commission as a possible solution for the same set of problems".

Community School Coordinator

Hiemstra (1972:38) suggests that present school administrators cannot develop components of community schools without additional administrative assistance. At the present time most community schools have, or would like to have, an additional "administrator", usually called the community school coordinator, to devote at least one-half of his/her time to bringing the school and community closer together. In Alberta, this new position was described as follows (Card, 1975:v):

> "During the period 1972-75 there has emerged rather abruptly in Alberta a relatively new role in Alberta schools and some other agencies. It is known as a community school coordinator or a community education coordinator. The emergence of this role reflects schools and educational processes more effectively to community life and problems."

More specifically, the community school coordinator should identify community needs, find leaders for programs and coordinate community and school programs (Education B.C., 1971). Decker (1972) attempted to isolate the characteristics of the successful community school coordinator. He surveyed central office administrators, principals, teachers and community school coordinators, and found three characteristics that were important for the coordinator to possess: positive job attitude, leadership skills and management skills.

Conclusion

The discussion will now return specifically to the three major problems as outlined earlier in the paper, i.e., underutilization of the school facilities, fiscal restraint with respect to education and decline in school program offering.

Underutilization of school facilities. The underutilization of school facilities would not be a major problem if school boards encouraged their schools to operate as community schools. The joint use of school facilities by community members of all ages for a wide variety of reasons would broaden the school's base of operation and allow the facilities to be used more frequently. The board support for more additional programs for school children and programs for adults will also bring the people to the school facilities, allowing them to be viewed as belonging to the community members and, therefore, open for their use.

Decline in program offerings. By broadening the school's base of operation to include adult courses and additional courses for children, more staff could be retained. For example, if the physical education teachers could also be used for adult programming, the schools might be better able to justify the retention of these teachers.

Alternatively, community members with certain expertise might be used on a regular basis to provide instruction at the school, such as the local band leader teaching instrumental music. In a small school this would solve the problem of hiring a full-time music teacher.

The community school co-ordinator position is often filled by a regular teacher released half-time from teaching duties. This would provide another employment opportunity for schools and allow for more program flexibility. Often funding for community school co-ordinators can be shared by education recreation departments.

Fiscal restraints. The development of community schools will initially introduce additional costs to the operating budget. Heat, light and maintenance costs will rise. However, these costs should be more than counterbalanced by general savings obtained from coordination of community services. If community agencies, such as day care and religious groups used part of the school buildings for office space and meetings, rent could be paid directly to the school board or the school board could be compensated by local or provincial authorities.

If schools use community resources, such as libraries, rinks and swimming pools, costs could be shared by these groups using the facilities and expensive duplication could be avoided. In addition, the school systems could share services with other agencies. For example, school social workers could be used by the local or provincial social services department, or vice versa.

Community involvement is vitally important to the continued financial support of school systems. The Gallup Poll for 1977 (Phi Delta Kappan, 1977:241) gave the following ranking for local schools by parents with children in school and parents with no children in school.

Grade Given	By Parents of School Children %	By Parents With No Children In School %
A	18	8
B	36	22
C	26	28
D	9	11
F	4	5
Don't know/no answer	7	25

The data indicate that parents with no children in school rated the schools lower than parents with children in school. With declining enrolment a large percentage of the general population is going to fall in the first category, i.e., parents with no children in school. It seems reasonable to suggest that if the schools served more of the adult population, whether or not they had children in school, then this segment of the population would view the schools in a more positive light. At least one study (Sullivan, 1976:183) indicated that community members in general feel that community schools serve a community better than non-community schools.

With more of the public supporting the activities of the school, it should be easier to convince politicians to adequately fund education.

Community school advocates would argue that there are additional reasons for developing community schools, not specifically related to declining enrolment, such as providing more relevant programs and an alternative school which maintains the existing school programs. However, even without arguing these points, the community school seems to be a viable alternative when attempting to maintain a high quality school program in the face of declining enrolments.

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